CLAIMS:

1.   A method of determining the size of a compressed stream of audio-visual data, wherein the compression has taken place by means of variable bit-rate compression, the method comprising the step of determining the duration of the stream of audio-visual data, characterized in that the method further comprises the following steps:

5   (a) determining the compression technique;

(b) determining the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data; and

(c) determining the size of the stream of audio-visual data using the information determined in the previous steps.

10   2.   A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data is indicated by an average bit rate at a given compression technique.

3.   A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data is indicated by a factor of information redundancy in the stream of audio-

15   visual data.

4.   A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data is derived from meta-data associated with the stream of audio-visual data.

20   5.   A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the duration of the stream of audio-visual data is derived from meta-data associated with the stream of audio-visual data.

6.   A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the duration of the stream of audio-visual data is derived from an apparatus for storing audio-visual data, the apparatus

25   being pre-programmed to store the stream of audio-visual data.

7.   A method as claimed in to claim 6, wherein the apparatus is pre-programmed to record the stream of audio-visual data from a pre-determined start time until a pre-determined end time.

8.   A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the size of the stream of audio-visual data is determined prior to reception of the full stream of audio-visual data.

9.   A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the stream of audio-visual data is
5   analog and digitized prior to the compression.

10.   A circuit for determining the size of a compressed stream of audio-visual data, wherein the compression has taken place by means of variable bit-rate compression, the circuit comprising a central processing unit conceived to determine the duration of the stream
10   of audio-visual data, characterized in that the central processing unit is further conceived to:
     (a) determine the compression technique used to compress the stream of audio-visual data;
     (b) determine the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data; and
     (c) determine the size of the stream of audio-visual data using the information on the
         duration of the stream of audio-visual data, the compression technique used to compress
15   the stream of audio-visual data and the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data.

11.   An apparatus for storing a stream of audio-visual data, the apparatus comprising a compression controller for compressing the stream of audio-visual data prior to storage of the stream of audio-visual data and the circuit as claimed in to claim 10.

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12.   A signal carrying a stream of audio-visual data and meta-data associated with the stream of audio-visual data, characterized in that the meta-data comprises information on the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data.

25   13.   A signal according to claim 12, wherein the information on the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data comprises an average bit rate of at least a part of the stream of audio-visual data.

14.   A signal according to claim 12, wherein the information on the complexity of
30   the stream of audio-visual data comprises a factor of information redundancy in the stream of audio-visual data.

15.   A signal according to claim 12, wherein the information on the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data is provided prior to providing the stream of audio-visual data.